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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 002294

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SUBJECT: Embassy Tegucigalpa Welcomes DOL Regional Basic
Education Project Targeting Child Laborers

Ref: (A) State 252932

(B) Olsen/Faulkner e-mail 9/11/03
(C) Tegucigalpa 2025

1. Post strongly supports the Department of Labor's proposed regional basic education project targeting child laborers and children at risk of working in Central America and welcomes the proposed visit of DOL officials/consultants (ref A).

2. DOL is currently funding ILO/IPEC programs to combat child labor in the following sectors: coffee in Santa Barbara, melons in Choluteca, commercial sexual exploitation of children in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, and child divers in the Mosquitia. (ILO/IPEC also has programs funded by other donors to help combat child labor in garbage dumps and domestic service in Tegucigalpa.) In addition, USAID/Washington is funding a successful one-year pilot project in Valle to provide educational opportunities to working children, which ends in December 2003. Post understands that further USAID/Washington funding for this project is unlikely.

3. Post suggests that DOL consider (1) working with ILO/IPEC to expand its program in Choluteca to encompass the USAID project in neighboring Valle and add sugar cane farms and child victims of commercial sex exploitation in the area which borders both El Salvador and Nicaragua, or (2) expand work combating commercial sexual exploitation of children in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and other large population centers which would augment the USG's support for increased GOH efforts against trafficking in persons (both domestic and international). Post notes that while assisting children working in commercial agriculture (a sector key to CAFTA) is a high priority, most child laborers work in the informal sector. Another option would be to begin a new program to assist children in the informal sector, many of whom might be street children or at risk to become street children.

4. Note: Please see ref C for more information on child labor in Honduras. End Note.

Palmer